

Obituaries

Sir Gerard Vaughan

Right wing health minister in the early years of the Thatcher government

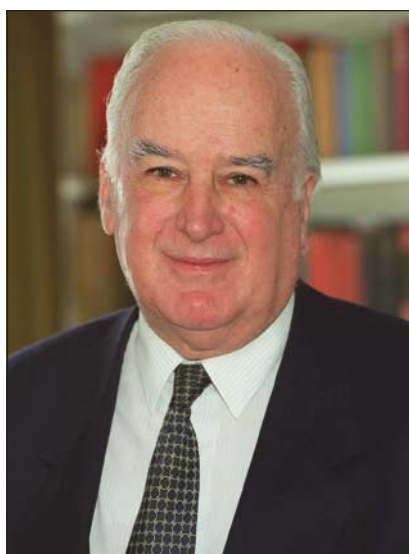
Sir Gerard Vaughan was one of only a handful of doctors to have ever served the government at ministerial level: he was former prime minister Margaret Thatcher's health minister from 1979 to 1982. In later years, as consumer affairs minister from 1982 to 1983, and on the backbenches, he was alarmed to discover how little weight the professional views of medical MPs carried. When once he volunteered to sit on a health committee, he was discouraged by the whips, who claimed "it would not be popular."

For Vaughan, the nature of his calling sat uncomfortably alongside his right wing credentials. His support for people affected by thalidomide, his concern for people with AIDS, and his calls for free eye and dental checks all contrasted sharply with, say, his maiden speech, which supported prescription charges and the end of free school milk. He was also in favour of the contraceptive pill being available to children under 16.

Vaughan was determined to cut what he saw as the waste and extravagance of the NHS, and in 1979 undertook a round of reorganisation that purported to save in the region of £30m. But he was sometimes too eager to please. He was reportedly persuaded by Denis Thatcher not to outlaw tobacco advertising because of the damage that such a ban would do to the sports industry.

In 1980 the *Sunday Mirror* attacked Vaughan for what it called "the great kidney machine scandal," a lack of funding for dialysis machines. He promptly wrote to the paper asking its readers to "help foot the bill," by sending in contributions. Although the paper decried his response as "a cheap cynical gimmick," on that occasion Vaughan undoubtedly emerged with the upper hand.

His nemesis came in the form of Joan Ruddock, who chaired the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, who was also the boss of his local Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) and later to be a Labour MP. Describing the bureau as a covert left wing organisation, Vaughan—who had succeeded Sally Oppenheimer as consumer affairs minister in 1982—proposed to reduce by half the CAB's government grant. The sub-



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sequent uproar from thousands of voluntary workers and their often Conservative MPs left Vaughan with little option but to retreat during a heated Commons debate. It was an expensive mistake: to prove its good intentions the Government eventually coughed up 50% more in funds for the CAB.

Gerard Folliott Vaughan was the son of a Royal Air Force officer, who was killed during the war. He was born in Xinavane, in Portuguese East Africa, and educated privately there. He studied at London University and went on to Guy's Hospital and Maudsley Hospital, where he obtained his diploma in psychological medicine. As a consultant he was in charge of the Bloomfield Clinic at Guy's from 1958 to 1979.

He became involved in politics in the mid-1950s, initially as an alderman on the London County Council. He stood at Poplar, east London, in the 1955 general election before taking Reading from Labour in 1970, the year that brought Ted Heath to Downing Street. He subsequently represented Reading South (1974-83) and Reading East (1983-97).

Vaughan first brought his health background into his political life in 1974. With

the Tories in opposition, he was founder and president of the Conservative Medical Society with the aim of basing the NHS on "total insurance cover" rather than taxation. When Mrs Thatcher became party leader in 1975, Vaughan became her health spokesman; and when she became prime minister in 1979, he was appointed health minister, initially under Patrick Jenkin and later under Norman Fowler.

After his disastrous swipe at the CAB, Vaughan was dropped from the government in 1983 with the then customary knighthood following in 1984. He served on the education select committee from 1983 to 1993, and the science and technology committee from 1993 to 1997. In his constituency he did battle in 1988 with Nicholas Ridley, who was determined to add yet more housing to Berkshire's diminishing green belt.

Ideologically, Vaughan was a man well to the right of the Conservative Party. He considered women to be poor debaters, claiming the Commons was "probably for men"; he criticised the "low standard" of Commonwealth doctors in the NHS and condemned the abuse of the system by foreigners; he led a delegation to the then speaker, Betty Boothroyd, demanding that she stop the Sinn Féin leader Gerry Adams using a room in the Palace of Westminster to launch his autobiography; and he notoriously said: "I don't accept homosexuality as a normal kind of behaviour."

While at Guy's, Vaughan had specialised in community affairs and social medicine. He was also a proponent of homoeopathy. As health minister he had prevented the closure of several wards at the Royal London Homeopathic Hospital, and later served as patron of the British Homeopathic Association.

He leaves a wife, Joyce Thurlle, whom he married in 1955, and a son and daughter. [TIM BULLAMORE]

Sir Gerard Folliott Vaughan, health minister 1979-82, and consultant psychiatrist Guy's Hospital 1958-79 (b 1923; q Guy's Hospital, London, 1947; DPM, FRCP, FRCPsych), d 29 July 2003.

Irihapeti Ramsden

Nurse who campaigned for the specific healthcare needs of indigenous peoples to be addressed

Irihapeti Ramsden is perhaps best known in Aotearoa New Zealand and internationally for the development of cultural safety—an educational framework for the analysis of power relationships between health professionals and those they serve. She consistently argued for the need to address the ongoing impact of historical, social, and political processes on Maori health disparities. Her ideas were both challenging and threatening to many pakeha (European) New Zealanders who were, and are, often ignorant of the country's history and fearful of difference.

Cultural safety has been part of the New Zealand nursing and midwifery curriculum since 1992 (see p 457). Its introduction was met with a barrage of negative, and sometimes vicious, media coverage, culminating in the threat of an inquiry by the New Zealand government's education and science select committee in 1995. Throughout this period Irihapeti—who trained as a registered general and obstetric nurse at Wellington Hospital in the 1960s—calmly and eloquently responded to misrepresentations and accusations about the aims of cultural safety. She also continued to teach and work towards developing a comprehensive education approach that would facilitate opportu-



nities for skilled analyses and an informed debate.

Irihapeti, who belonged to the people of Ngai Tahu-potiki and Rangitane, New Zealand, worked in comparative intellectual and emotional isolation for many years. Her views were often as unpredictable as they were original. In 1990 during the 150th anniversary commemorations of the Treaty of Waitangi, the founding document of New

Zealand, she was dismissive of the building of waka (war canoes) that were being hailed by Maori and pakeha alike as an exciting rebirth of Maori tradition. "They are nothing more than Maori frigates", she said, "and simply reinforce the stereotype of Maori as warriors."

She held various international positions over the years, including being the New Zealand representative to the International Bioethics Board. The International Council of Nurses, representing nurses and nursing in 118 countries, recommended in 1995 that cultural safety be included in the education programmes of all national nursing associations. Just weeks before her death, Irihapeti was awarded the New Zealand Order of Merit for her services to nursing and Maori health.

Irihapeti was diagnosed as having cancer eight years ago but continued to work at an astounding pace. Her doctorate, "Cultural Safety and Nursing Education in Aotearoa and Te Waipounamu" (<http://culturalsafety.massey.ac.nz>), was completed just months before her death. [LIS ELLISON-LOSCHMANN]

Irihapeti Merenia Ramsden, nurse and healthcare campaigner New Zealand (b 1946; PhD), d 5 April 2003.

Andrew Robert Gibbons



General practitioner Halesowen, West Midlands (b Ealing, London, 1947; q Birmingham 1971; MRCP), died from ischaemic and hypertensive heart disease on 19 February 2003.

After junior hospital posts in Birmingham and Portsmouth, Andrew joined a well established general practice in Halesowen in 1978, becoming senior partner in 1990. He also enjoyed working as a hospital practitioner in the local chest clinic, specialising in tuberculosis. Holidays were spent caravanning with the family through France enjoying local food and wines. He was a great reader, and music, the theatre, and dog walking figured highly in his life. He leaves a wife, Heather, and three children. [C BAMFORD]

Denys ("Peter") Horton

Former general practitioner Billingham, Lincolnshire (b 1918; q Birmingham 1940), died on 26 March 2003 following a stroke.

Following house jobs he entered the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve as surgeon lieutenant, serving on destroyers and with the Royal Marines. Entering practice in Billingham in 1946, he stayed until his retirement in 1978. He combined work with a large garden, family caravan holidays, and field sports. Political life was not ignored, with service on the local medical committee and chairmanship of Lincoln Medical Society. Retirement to Lincoln enabled him to develop another garden. He and his wife celebrated their diamond wedding in 2000. Predeceased by his wife, he leaves three sons and five grandchildren. [RICHARD HORTON]

James Stewart ("Monty") McConnachie

Former consultant surgeon Tredegar and Nevill Hall Hospitals (b Fraserburgh 1913, q Aberdeen 1938; BSc, FRCS), d 29 April 2003.

Monty joined the Royal Army Medical Corps at the outbreak of the second world war. He was active in Europe, and in the Far East he was a prisoner of war in the infamous Changi jail. For the rest of the war

he was in the jungle camps associated with the "Death Railway" bordering the Gulf of Siam. After the war, he was surgical registrar in Inverness and then senior registrar in Aberdeen until 1949. His consultant appointment was in Tredegar, where he succeeded Dr E T Davies, immortalised in the novel *The Citadel* by A J Cronin. Predeceased by his first wife, Dot, and his son, he leaves his second wife, Megan. [R F RINTOUL]

Adrian Raban-Williams

Former general practitioner Tunbridge Wells (b Nairobi 1928; q the London Hospital 1951), d 26 June 2003.

Adrian spent his national service in the navy and served in Japan at the end of the Korean war. He also worked in a leper colony. On returning to England he was a doctor in Guildford and then Guilsborough before Tunbridge Wells, where he and his family lived in a flat over the surgery. In 1966 a new surgery was built to Adrian's design. The practice now supports six doctors. On retirement Adrian fulfilled a lifelong pledge to return to Africa to work as a volunteer doctor for the Salvation Army. He leaves a wife, Sheelagh; four children; and 10 grandchildren. [ROBIN RABAN-WILLIAMS]

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